Slavery - 1932

Seeks Pensions For Ex-Slaves

Amsterdam News

New York, N.Y.

3-16-32

WASHINGTON, March 14 (ANP).—A bill to authorize pensions to ex-slaves seventy-five years of age or over has been introduced in the House of Representatives by Congressman Oscar DePriest of the First district of Illinois.

That portion of the bill dealing with the amount of compensation to be paid reads: "That any ex-slave citizen of the United States, or its territorial or insular possessions, who was freed by the Emancipation Proclamation of January 1, 1863, and who is eligible under the requirements of Section 2 of this Act, shall be paid a monthly pension by the administrator of Veterans' Affairs in an amount which equals but does not exceed $30, when added to the monthly net income of the applicant (averaged over annual periods and included in the annual income from any personal or real property)."

Another section of the bill creates a new position in the Veterans' Bureau. It reads: "There is hereby established in the Veterans' Administration an office to be known as the office of ex-slave counsel, and to be under the direction of an ex-slave counsel. The counsel shall be appointed by the President, by and with the advice and consent of the Senate, for a term of four years, and shall receive a salary of $7,500 a year. The counsel shall not actively engage in any other business, vocation or employment while serving as ex-slave counsel."

Ex-Slave Who Joined Navy In Civil War Dies In Connecticut

Age

3-12-32

New York, N.Y.

Putnam, Conn.—Thomas Taylor, one of Putnam's few remaining Civil War Veterans, who was on the Monitor when she fought her famous battle with the Merrimac, died Monday, March 7, never having fully recovered from a beating he received at the hands of robbers several months ago. He had spent two weeks in a hospital.

Born a slave 85 years ago on a plantation in Currituck County, N. C. he was 14 when Fort Sumpter was fired upon. On March 1, 1862, he and another slave in a bold stroke, escaped. At Hampton Roads he was engaged as a powder monkey on the Monitor. Throughout the war he served in the navy and after the war kept to the sea. About 50 years ago he located in Putnam.

There are no known survivors. A son, William went to Mexico about 30 years ago and has never been heard from since.

Home

Talladega, Ala

MAR 18 1932

EX-SLAVE PENSIONS.

The Selma Times-Journal sees little likelihood of ex-slaves ever receiving a pension as the result of the passage of a bill recently introduced in congress. The Selma paper says:

Slaves freed in this country in 1863 would receive Federal pensions of as high as $30 monthly under the provisions of the bill, just introduced in the House by Representative De Priest of Chicago. They would have to be 75 or more years old; not be an inmate of any public correctional institution: have no family support, have been a continuous resident of the United States or its possessions since the Emancipation Proclamation; and must not have served in prison for felony involving moral turpitude in the 10 years preceding application for the pension.

Other restrictions on the payments of the proposed pensions are named in the measure. An "Office of Ex-slave Counsel" would be created in the Veterans' Administration to handle work connected with the distribution of funds.

No estimate is given as to what the size of this new draft on the treasury would be. Just how many of the old negroes still survive who would be beneficiaries of such a hand-out by the overnment is not known, but there is small chance that the De Priest bill will ever be anything more than a bill.

DePRIEST PENSION BILL

IN an effort to give recognition and due justice to those who are now living who were emancipated by the Emancipation Proclamation, issued by Abraham Lincoln in 1863," Congressman DePriest introduced in the House his bill to provide a pension for ex-slaves. The provisions of the bill set forth the conditions under which ex-slaves are to receive the pension. Among other things, the ex-slaves must be seventy-five years of age or more, the recipient must have continuously lived in the United States or its territorial or insular possessions since the date of the issuance of the Emancipation Proclamation. Further, such persons must not be confined as an inmate of any insane asylum or in any prison, jail, workhouse, or any other public correctional institution at the time he makes application for the pension. Furthermore, if he has been in prison for felony involving moral turpitude during the period of ten years immediately preceding the date of his application, he need not apply. No person will be eligible for this pension who has divested himself, directly or indirectly, of any property for the purpose of qualifying for pension under the DePriest bill. The Administrator of Veterans' Affairs will nave jurisdiction in the event the DePriest bill becomes law.

Courier 3-26-32

Perhaps not in many years has such a plea been made for the ex-slaves as was made by Mr. DePriest at the time he presented his bill. The Congressman reviewed the excellent record of the Negro as a soldier, beginning with the death of Crispus Attucks and closing with the record of our boys on foreign soil. Mr. DePriest has carefully set out the total number of male and female ex-slaves by States and it appears, from his schedule, that some of the Southern States have 10,000 and more of such ex-slaves. To quote from the schedule, "Alabama has over 10,000; Arkansas over 4,000; Georgia over 11,000; Florida over 3,000; and even in the District of Columbia there are over 12,000; Louisiana has over 8,000; Mississippi has over 10,000; Missouri over 3,000; and even in Montana there are 24. New Jersey has over 1,500; New York over 1,900; and North Carolina has over 8,000. Twenty-seven are found to be living in the State of Oregon, while Pennsylvania has over 2,500; South Carolina over 6,000; Tennessee over 5,000; and Texas and Virginia over 8,000 each. Scattered all over the United States are to be found the grand total of 118,446 ex-slaves who are 75 years of age and over, according to the 1930 United States census.

Pittsburgh, Pa.

According to the very best information, gleaned from insurance companies who have calculated the average life of an individual, these ex-slaves who are now 75 years of age, according to Mr. DePriest, can not and will not live more than ten or twelve years. Mr. DePriest takes the position that these people, in their declining years, can be relieved of want and starvation under the provisions of his bill at a cost of about three and a half million dollars per year, plus administration expenses, which ought not to exceed a million dollars for the next ten-year period. Inasmuch as the larger portion of the ex-slaves to be benefited is to be found in Southern States, it is pointed out by Mr. DePriest that the Southern members of the House should be more than willing to aid their section of the country by voting for this bill. The data has been carefully prepared and the figures are taken from the United States census, and there is little doubt that the argument presented by Mr. DePriest will find immediate and favorable response on the part of our Congress.

It must be said for Mr. DePriest that his proposed measure for relief of ex-slaves is the first sincere effort ever to be made by any member of Congress in behalf of our worn-out, decrepit, and poverty-stricken ex-slaves. Mr. DePriest deserves unstinted credit for his thoughtfulness and his courageous effort to refresh the minds of the American people of one of their neglected obligations. It is our hope that the bill passes.

EX-SLAVES TO BENEFIT BY DEPRIEST BILL

Illinoisan Introduces Pension Measure

3-27-32

Chicago Defender

WASHINGTON, D. C., March 11.—A bill calling for pensions to ex-slave citizens of the United States or of its territorial or insular possessions was introduced into the United States house of representatives last Thursday by Representative Oscar DePriest of

the First congressional district of Illinois.

The bill was referred to the committee on invalid pensions, of which Congressman DePriest is a member.

The bill provides that any person who was freed by the Emancipation Proclamation of President Lincoln on Jan. 1, 1863, and who is eligible under further provisions of the act, shall receive a pension which equals but does not exceed $30 per month when added to the monthly net income of the applicant. The money is to be paid by the administrator of veterans affairs.

Those eligible to receive the pension under the act are persons 75 years of age and over, who have continuously resided in the United States, its territories or possessions, and who are not inmates of any prison, insane asylum or other public correctional institution. Also excluded from eligibility are persons otherwise coming within its terms who have been in prison for a crime involving moral turpitude during the ten-year period prior to the enactment of the measure, or who under any existing state or federal laws are entitled to support by living children or relatives.

Additional Provisions

Further provisions of the bill provide that no pension shall be payable "(1) during the period such person or an inmate of, and receiving the necessities of life from, any charitable institution maintained by the United States or by a state or any political subdivision thereof; or (2) to any person who has divested himself, directly or indirectly, of any property for the purpose of qualifying for pension under this act."

Additional stipulations of the bill provide for the modification or revocation by the administrator of veterans' affairs of any pension granted in order to conform to a possible changed status of the pensioner. The pension is payable monthly under the bill, and applications for pension are to be in writing on forms provided by the veterans bureau. In addition to the monthly pension, it is provided that the veterans administration shall defray the burial expenses of any indigent ex-slave in a sum not to exceed $100.

Creates New Federal Job

Under the bill a new federal position will be created to take care of the administration of the act. The job created is that of ex-slave counsel, who is to direct the administration of the act and is to have a complete office force, the salaries and number of whom are to be fixed by the administrator of veterans affairs. The ex-slave counsel is to be appointed by the president, and requires senatorial confirmation. His salary is fixed at $7,500 a year. The duties of the ex-slave counsel are prescribed to be: To direct the administration of the act, to represent "the ex-slave public" before the veterans administration, to hold any investigations or hearings necessary to the proper administration of his office.

Numbers Affected by Bill

Inquiry at the office of Congressman DePriest failed to reveal the exact number of persons eligible under the bill to receive pensions or the amount of federal funds involved. Morris Lewis, secretary to the congressman, stated that there were 118,446 Race persons in the United States, who were 75 years of age and over. What number of these persons would come within the eligibility rules provided by the act could not be estimated at this time he stated.

EX-SLAVES BEWARE, LEWIS, SAYS

WASHINGTON, Apr. 11.—(CNS)—A warning was issued to all ex-slaves last week from the offices of Congressman Oscar DePriest of Illinois, telling them to beware of individuals or associations seeking to enroll them as prospective beneficiaries of the ex-slave pension bill introduced recently by the Illinois congressman. Mr. Morris Lewis, secretary to Congressman DePriest, stated last [illegible] has been represented t[illegible] States Treasury Dep[illegible] certain organizatio[illegible]als in some parts of [illegible] are soliciting prospective [illegible]es and collecting various fees for promised enrollment and services (in connection with the bill). The public is warned against persons assuming such authority or reason to make such collection."

Mr. Lewis went on to state that in the usual case of such legislation no fees were allowed to be charged by persons representing the pensioners.

The bill in question, provides for the payment of monthly pensions to ex-slaves in sums up to $30 a month, provided that the ex-slave has no other means of income from private or public sources. Little likelihood of its passage at this session of Congress was felt by legislative observers here. Under the circumstances, the acceptance of fees from indigent ex-slaves was characterized as "gross sort of exploitation of a poor class of persons" deserving a criminal action. The solicitation of such fees at this time is a fraud, it was stated and is punishable both by state and federal courts.

Pensions For Ex-Slaves.

Every true southerner will be touched by the bill recently introduced in Congress to pension the ex-slaves.

It is doubtful that the bill will be passed, since the country is already groaning under the pension burden. But there is much to be said for the faithful old negroes whose memories wander back to the plantation days. The youngest is now around 70, and the 1930 census reports that about 120,000 of them survive. The loyalty of the slaves to their masters in the dark days of civil war is an epic of southern history, and long ago became one of our treasured traditions. The slaves could have ended the war instantly if they had turned upon the mothers and the children left at home by the young masters who took the saddle. There is enough sentiment in the bill to cause southerners to follow it with an abiding interest.

Ex-Slave Dies.

Emily Starr, a negro woman who was born a slave of the Dillard Adams family, of Covington, and served all her life as a house servant of the Adamses, died here Tuesday afternoon. She was 72 years old and, though freed when she was five, continued to serve her "white folks" throughout her life.

She was widely known in Alcorn county and her body will be taken Sunday to Covington for burial. She is survived by four children, eight grandchildren and one great-grandchild.

NEGRO CENTENARIAN DIES IN WASHINGTON

TENNILLE, Ga., April 22.—Ned Peacock, negro, over 100 years old, said to be the oldest person in Washington county, died at his home near here Thursday. He was owned by the Peacock family before the War Between the States. During the conflict he ran away from his master, Captain George Peacock, and joined the Union forces. At the close of the war he returned to this county. He received $100 a month pension from the government.

Honor John Brown With Plaque At Harpers Ferry, Va.

WASHINGTON, April 13.— The 23d Annual conference in Washington of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, May 17 to 22, will make a pilgrimage to Harper's Ferry, Va., and there place a memorial tablet on John Brown's fort.

Henry T. McDonald, president of Storer college, Harper's Ferry, on whose campus John Brown's fort is situated, has consented to act as host to the conference for the memorial exercises and will personally deliver a naddres sof welcome.

One of the addresses at the memorial services will be delivered by D. W. E. B. DuBois, editor of the Crisis, member of the N. A. A. C P board of directors and author of a life of John Brown Others invited to speak at these exercises are Dr J. Max Barber of Philadelphia, president of the John Brown Memorial association and Oswald Garrison Villar, editor of the Nation, and vice president of the N. A. A. C. P. and also author of the biography of Brown.

The N. A. A. C. P.. decision to hold the memorial services for John Brown and place the tablet on his fort is a direct reply to the new "copperhead" doctrines discrediting the Negro and his companions to pay tribute to the Abolitionists an to rededicate the N. A. A. C. P. to a militant struggle for Negro rights.

REGISTER-GAZETTE
ROCKFORD, ILL.

MAR 26 1932

PENSIONS FOR EX-SLAVES.

If more federal pensions are to be authorized by the present session of congress, 100,000 former Negro slaves still living should be recipients of such recognition of government indebtedness Representative Oscar DePriest, of Chicago, only colored member of congress, contends.

Declaring that "no greater loyalty can humankind show in any place in history" than the colored slaves of the south gave their masters DePriest, a native of Alabama whose parents were ex-slaves, proposes that all of his race over 75 years of age who saw servitude shall be pensioned at the rate of $30 a month.

The last census gave the number of Negroes over 75 in the United States as 118,000, of whom 2,354 reside in Illinois. How many of the aged colored folk in Illinois actually were slaves has not been determined, but it is estimated not more than half could have been as the state had a considerable colored population, all free, of course, at outbreak of the civil war. Georgia, Alabama and Mississippi have the largest number of those who would benefit under DePriest's proposal, probably 10,000 in each of the three states.

Annual cost of such a pension would be $3,600,000 the first year, it is estimated. Unrequited toil of America's slave population over a period of 244 years, at $50 per slave per year, was worth $3,333,000,000, the Negro congressman figures. Improbable as favorable action on the plan seems, at least the proposal raises an interesting question as to the nation's responsibility for those who unwillingly were imported into this country to serve long years of bondage.

LETTERS OF DOUGLAS TO GO TO CHICAGO U

CHATTANOOGA, Tenn., May 14 (AP)—George Fort Milton, editor and publisher of the Chattanooga News, today announced the University of Chicago has concluded arrangements to acquire the letters of Stephen A. Douglas.

The Douglas correspondence, consisting of about 20,000 letters, has been in the custody of Robert Dick Douglas, of Greensboro, N. C., a grandson.

Mr. Milton, an authority on the life of Douglas, has read the letters and will use parts of them in a biography of Douglas he expects to prepare soon.

"It is particularly significant and fitting," Mr. Milton said, "that the University of Chicago should become the resting place of Stephen A. Douglas' correspondence, because Douglas himself was the prime mover in the foundation of the first University of Chicago, gave land for the campus and made possible the establishment of the institution of which the present one is the namesake and immediate successor.

"In my opinion, the Douglas papers represent perhaps the most important new contribution to American historical source material which has been discovered and made available in the past 20 years. They are chiefly letters of the '50s, and are particularly concentrated from 1855 until Douglas' death in 1861. They are unusually representative in their source from the north, south, east and west. A careful reading of them bestows a new force and significance to that great stream of American opinion which was so anxious to secure a peaceful accommodation of sectional disagreements, and to liquidate the slavery conflict without the necessity of arbitrament by the sword."